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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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CONTENTS

2. South Vietnam: Recent military developments have lent emphasis to efforts to form new government. (Page 3)

4. Congo: Improved rebel tactics slowing down government offensive in northeast. (Page 5)

5. India: Shastri government threatened by dissension over language issue. (Page 6)

25X1

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Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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*South Vietnam: Recent military developments have lent impetus to efforts to form a new government in Saigon.

Agreement reportedly has been reached by the Armed Forces Council to name Interior Minister Nguyen Luu Vien as premier. Discussions now are centering on the designation of individual cabinet members.

The projected "wartime" cabinet is expected to have strong military representation, particularly in posts directly concerned with prosecution of the war effort. Proposed civilian members include both politicians and technicians.

The earlier proposed military-civilian council appears to have receded in importance, and now seems likely to play only an advisory role to the Armed Forces Council.

[General Khanh's active role in forming the government has not lessened suspicions within military and civilian circles of his ambitions to exercise full power. Khanh recently told the US Embassy that Vien was causing trouble by wanting to name his own men to the cabinet when the "best people" were needed.]

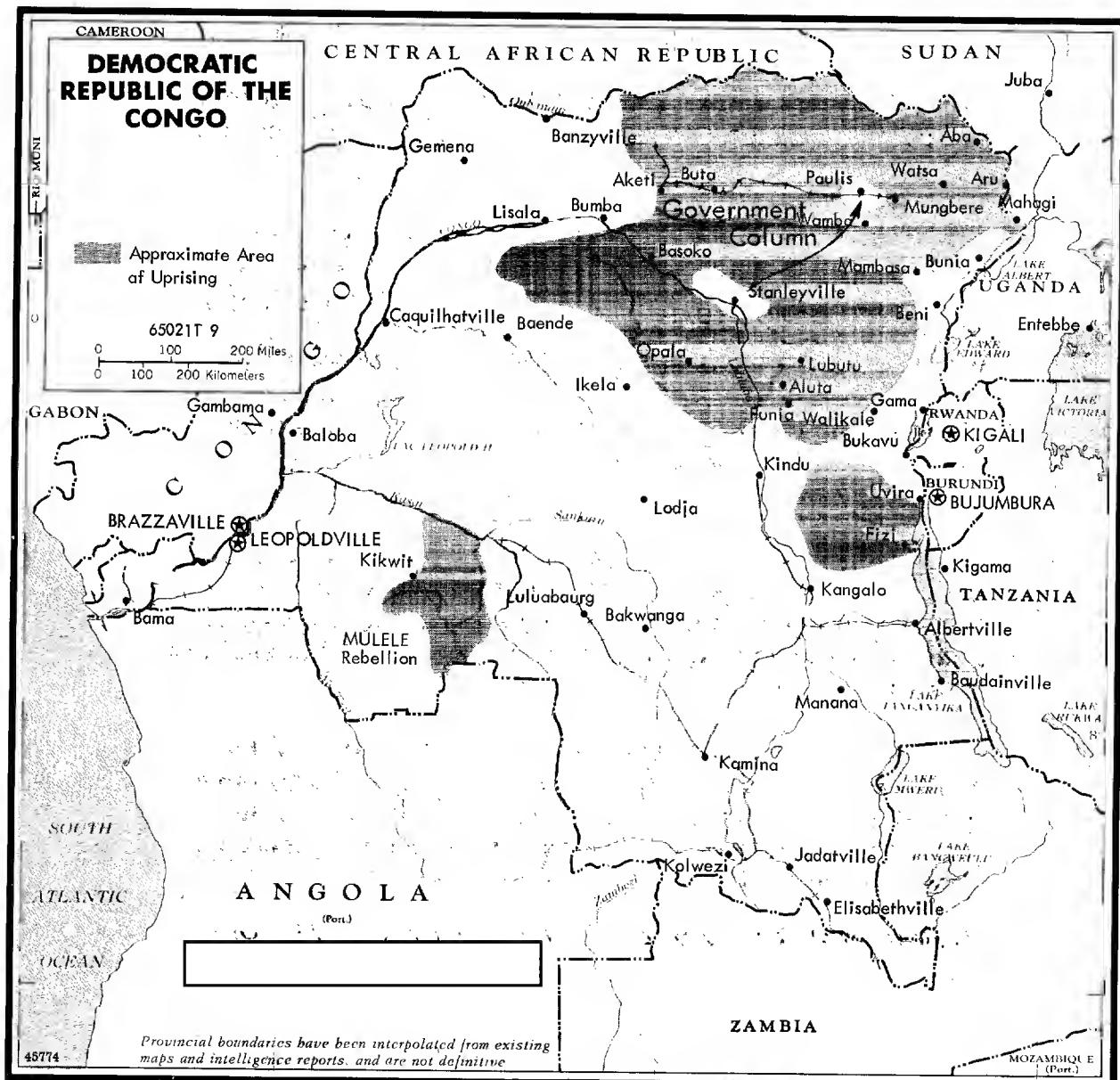
Buddhist leaders presently are taking a somewhat detached attitude, but are likely to associate Vien with former Premier Huong's regime in which he played a key role.

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Congo: Rebel tactics in the northeast are showing increasing sophistication.

In the last few days frequent well-planned ambushes have cost the government column driving from Stanleyville to Paulis over 50 casualties and several vehicles. The rebels are armed with Soviet and Czech equipment, including rocket-launchers.

The skill with which the rebels are opposing the column suggests that they have received special training, but no foreign advisers have been seen with them thus far. The only foreign personnel known to have been with the rebels are Ugandan, near Mahagi on the Ugandan frontier. Reports of substantial numbers of Algerian and Egyptian military personnel in the southern Sudan are still unconfirmed.]

[On the government side, South African and Rhodesian mercenaries are continuing to train at Kamina. Contrary to earlier reports, these mercenaries are for the most part inexperienced and number only 113. They are also short of equipment and arms. Mercenary chief Hoare is in South Africa trying to recruit about 200 more.]

[These difficulties, together with the opposition encountered by the Paulis column, suggest that the planned government offensive to close the northeastern frontier will be further delayed.]

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* India: The resignation yesterday of two members of the Shastri government points up the threat to the prime minister's position from regional dissension over the language issue.

Agriculture Minister Subramaniam and the minister of state for oil resigned, reportedly because Shastri rejected their fellow southerners' demands to drop imposition of Hindi as India's only official language. Hindi is spoken by less than 40 percent of the population. The government has been forced to deploy troops in an attempt to put down severe rioting against the change, which became effective on 26 January.

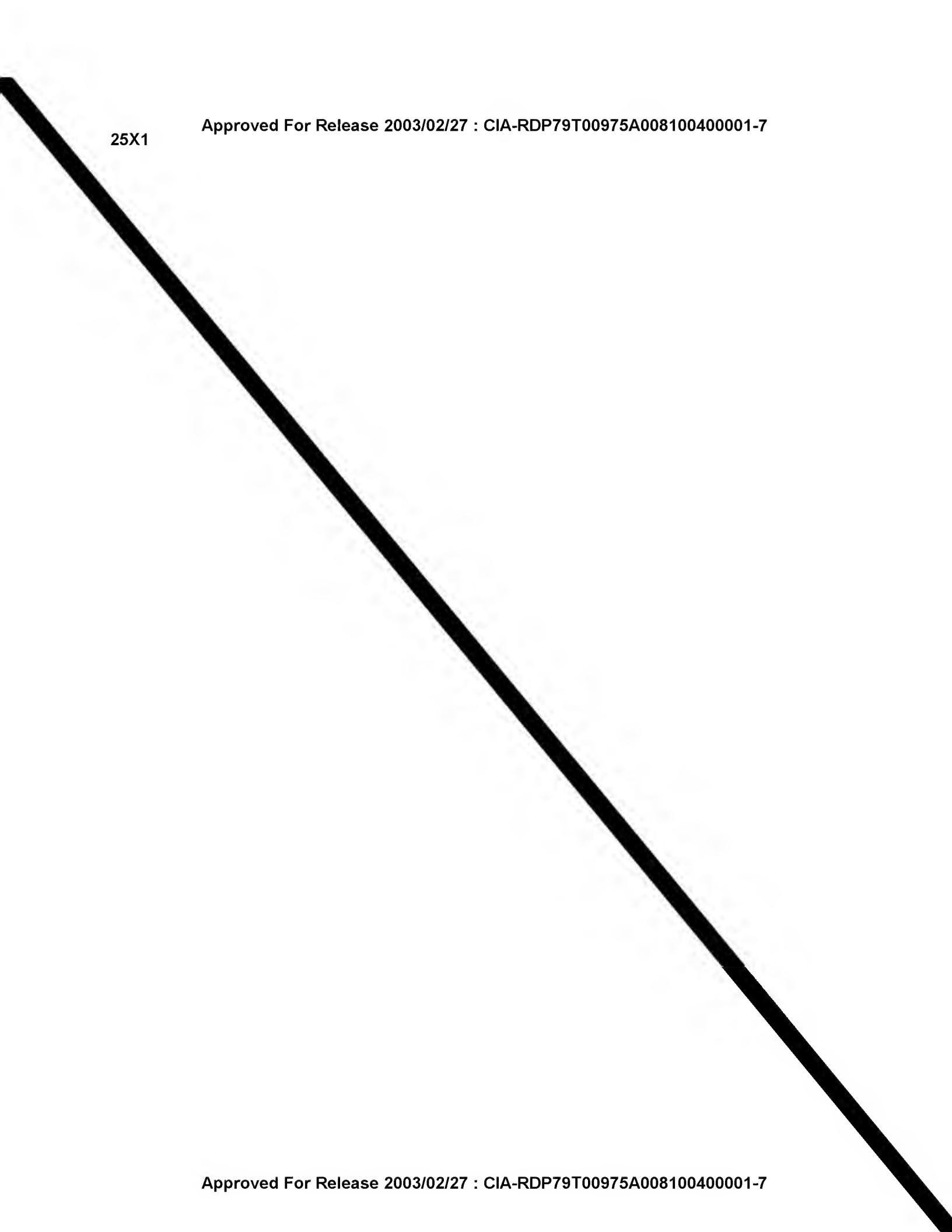
Prime Minister Shastri has pledged that the government will continue to use English as well as Hindi for official purposes, but has rejected demands for a constitutional amendment to extend English indefinitely. Such oral assurances are not likely to satisfy the southerners, who are traditionally wary of northern discrimination.

Many of Shastri's closest colleagues are southerners and have urged flexibility on the language question. This group includes Congress Party President Kamaraj--long standing boss of Madras--whose support is essential to Shastri's continuance in office. On the other hand, concessions to the south could alienate powerful northern Hindi-speaking elements within Shastri's cabinet and party who argue that continued use of a Western language is incompatible with Indian independence.

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* Because of the shortage of time for preparation of this item, the analytic interpretation presented here has been produced by the Central Intelligence Agency without the participation of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

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